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The Knight of the Burning Pestle AND *Wily Beguiled*

Among the most interesting features of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* are the references and allusions made to other plays of the day. No one, I think, has pointed out a parallel between it and *Wily Beguiled* which is almost close enough to warrant the statement that *Wily* was one of the sources used by Beaumont and Fletcher. This parallel is between scenes xiv and xvi of *Wily* and I, ii, and II, iv and v, of *The Knight*. The similarities run as follows:

(1) In *Wily* the heroine, Lelia, has given her love to a poor scholar, Sophos, but her father, despising the scholar's poverty, has sworn to marry her to a rich farmer's son.

In *The Knight* the heroine, Luce, has given her love to the poor prentice, but her father has determined that she shall marry the richer Humphry.

(2) In both plays the heroines reach their favored lovers by pretending to elope with the less fortunate.

(3) In both plays the elopement is thru a forest, on the other side of which both heroines claim to have a friend whose home is to be their destination.

(4) In both the elopement thru the forest is during the night.

(5) In *Wily* the nurse tells Lelia that her brother swears

That he will venture all,
Both fame and bloud, and limme and life,
But *Lelia* shall be *Sophos* wedded wife.

(Malone Soc. Reprint, ll. 1732 ff.)

Before setting out with his supposed love, Humphry says,

I am resolv'd to ventur life and lim
For one so yong, so faire, so kind, so trim. (I, ii, 128)

(6) In both plays, after the heroine has led him to the place in the forest where her favored lover is waiting, the rejected lover receives a severe beating.

(7) The exclamations of Churms and Humphry when deprived of their supposed loves, are much the same:

Churms. You wrong me much to rob me of my loue. (Line 2109)

Humph. If it be so, my friend, you use me fine:

What do you think I am? (II, iv, 22-23)

(8) In both cases the beating is spoken of as a payment.

(9) Both girls scoff at their rejected suitors.

In *Wily*:

Lelia. [To Churms] . . .
I must confesse I would haue chosen you,
But that I nere beheld your legs till now:
Trust me I neuer lookt so low before.

Churms. I know you use to looke aloft.

Lelia. Yet not so high as your crowne.

Churms. What if you had?

Lelia. Faith I should ha spied but a Calues head. (Ll. 2123 ff.)

In *The Knight*:

Luce. Alas, poor Humphrie,
Get thee some wholesome broth, with sage and comfrie;
A little oile of roses and a feather
To noint thy backe withall.

Fare-well, my pretty nump; I am verie sorrie
I cannot beare thee companie. (II, iv, 31-34; 36-37)

(10) In *Wily Robin Goodfellow*, Churms' accomplice, is dressed in a calf-skin and receives a severe beating. In *The Knight*, attempting to act as Humphry's champion, Raph is beaten by Jasper, who, as he administers the beating, exclaims:

With that he stood upright in his stirrups,
And gave the Knight of the Calve-skinne such a knocke,
That he forsooke his horse and downe he fell. . . .
(II, v, 35-37)

(11) Robin, after his beating, takes his leave with:

The diuel himself was neuer coniu'r'd so; (L. 2075)

while Humphry, under similar circumstances, says:

The diuel's dam was ne're so bang'd in hell. (II, iv, 38)

Wily Beguiled, though presumably acted some years before, was first printed in 1606. Professor Thorndike has made it appear probable that *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* was first produced in 1607. In view of the number and the diversity of the similarities between the two plays, we should, I think, be justified in assuming that *Wily Beguiled* suggested certain parts of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*.

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BORROWING BY ANATOLE FRANCE

In Anatole France's *L'Anneau d'Améthyste* (ed. Calmamm-Lévy, pp. 186-7) M. Bergeret, attempting to reach a book placed high on the upper shelf of his library, is led to meditate upon the importance of the thumb and fingers:

"... les hommes ne seraient point artistes s'ils avaient quatre pieds et point de mains.

"— C'est à la main, se dit-il, que les hommes doivent d'être constructeurs de machines, peintres, scribes et généralement manipulateurs de toutes substances. S'ils n'avaient point un pouce opposé aux autres